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Harris County Public Health Expands Vaccine Registration Process with New COVID-19 Vaccination Portal

‘Smart Waitlist’ System to Ensure Efficient, Fair, and Equitable Registration Process for Eligible Residents; County Has Currently Vaccinated 27,426 Individuals

HOUSTON — Starting on Tuesday, January 26th, Harris County Public Health (HCPH) will launch a new COVID-19 Vaccination Portal for residents who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) criteria for receiving a vaccine. The portal will allow individuals to be placed on a waitlist and contacted once vaccines and appointments are available. The waitlist will be available via the vaccine information link on ReadyHarris.org and <https://vacstrac.hctx.net> starting no later than Tuesday afternoon. Eligible residents without internet access can also call (832) 927-8787 once the portal is live to be placed on the waitlist.

Harris County’s new “Smart Waitlist” system **will not use a first-come, first-served process** for allocating vaccines. In order to ensure fair access for elderly residents, working families, and vulnerable populations, **registrants on the waitlist will instead be selected through a prioritization and randomization process in accordance with state guidelines.** Only individuals who fall under the [DSHS Phase 1A and 1B category](#) will be eligible to receive the vaccine at this stage. Those who are not qualified to receive the vaccine under 1A or 1B will still be able to be placed on the waitlist but will not be contacted to schedule an appointment until the State of Texas expands eligibility beyond 1A and 1B, likely not until the Spring or Summer.

Priority phases:

- **Phase 1A:** Individuals in Phase 1A who register for the waitlist will be prioritized before those in Phase 1B to ensure everyone in Phase 1A has an opportunity to receive the vaccine. Within Phase 1A, individuals will be selected at random from the following age cohorts, with oldest cohorts prioritized first: 75+, 65-74, 55-64, 45-54, 35-44, 25-34, 18-24.
- **Phase 1B:** Individuals in Phase 1B who register for the waitlist will be selected at random from the following age cohorts, with oldest cohorts prioritized first: 75+, 65-74, 55-64, 45-54, 35-44, 25-34, 18-24.
- **Future Phases:** Individuals who are not qualified to receive the vaccine under Phases 1A or 1B will still be able to register for the waitlist. However, they will not be contacted to schedule an appointment until the Texas DSHS expands eligibility beyond Phases 1A and 1B.

Once individuals are selected to receive a vaccine, they will be provided a link with instructions on how to select a location and time to get vaccinated at a HCPH site.

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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The launch of this new portal and waitlist expands the previous process by allowing eligible residents to sign up for vaccines on their own directly. Since December, Harris County Public Health has administered 27,426 vaccines to eligible residents, less than a week after receiving each shipment. To date, HCPH has so far been reaching out directly to and vaccinating front-line workers under Phase 1A and specific groups in Phase 1B who have high contacts or will have trouble obtaining a vaccine outside of HCPH.

As more supply of vaccine becomes available, HCPH will continue to ensure allocation and administration of vaccines are done in ways that are efficient, fair, and equitable, and that vulnerable communities have equal access to vaccines.

Residents who are selected for an appointment should show up no more than 15 minutes before their scheduled time to ensure the process flows smoothly. Those who are not eligible or who show up without an appointment at an HCPH site will be turned away. All appointments are based on vaccine availability, and current appointments may be adjusted due to any possible changes to the department's vaccine allotment.

Current COVID-19 vaccines require two shots and the protectiveness of the vaccine -- which has a 94% efficacy rate -- does not set in until a week or two after your second shot. Even with the arrival of a COVID-19 vaccine, HCPH encourages residents to stay home, cancel gatherings, wear a facemask, socially distance, and get tested.

In addition to the new registration portal, HCPH will be launching a [COVID-19 Vaccine Data Hub](#). The Data Hub that show vaccine availability, distribution and other demographic data. The data included currently only reflects vaccines allocated to Harris County Public Health and select providers in the area through the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and will grow to include partnering organizations and Houston Health Department in the near future.

More information about COVID-19 vaccines is available at www.hcphtx.org or www.ReadyHarris.org.

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